



A Child's Christmas

Dec. 10 & 11, 2022

Wanting Memories	Ysaye Barnwell (b. 1946)
The Carolers at My Door Snow Globe Upon a Sill	Caroline Mallonee (b. 1975) Mallonee
The Miracle of Saint Nicholas	George Perle (1915-2009)
Wassail Song	Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
Hiraeth (harp solo) The Flower of Bethlehem (Rhosyn Duw)	Grace Williams (1906-1977) G. Williams
Acalanto para o Menino Jesus Domaredansen <i>Dancers: Elizabeth Engelberth, Clara Gong, Gabriella Herrera, Sarah Murray, Murray & Randi Spiegel</i>	Ernani Aguiar (b.1950) arr. Drew Collins (b. 1975)
Noél Ayisyen	Emile Desamours (b. 1941)
Ocho Kandelikas <i>Sarah O'Sullivan</i> Go Where I Send Thee!	Flory Jagoda (1923-2021) arr. Joshua Jacobson (b. 1948) arr. Caldwell (b.1963) and Ivory (b.1969)

INTERMISSION

Puer Nobis A Winter Ride Singkap Siaga <i>Elizabeth Engelberth</i> CHAMBER SINGERS	Richard R. Bennett (1936-2012) Misty L. Dupuis Tracy Wong
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A Child's Christmas in Wales	Matthew Harris (b. 1956)
I. One Christmas was So Much Like Another	
II. Fire! <i>Ted Roper, Sarah Murray, Kim Williams, Ben Schroeder, Ken Short, Beth Wilson</i>	
III. Years and Years Ago <i>David Thomson (Saturday), Matthew Onigman (Sunday)</i>	
IV. The Useful Presents	

V. The Useless Presents

VI. The Uncles

William Marinovic, Holland Jancaitis, Ken Short, Ben Schroeder, Jocelyn Keefe, Alyssa Casazza, Louise Karger, Regina McElroy, Sarah Murray, Max Calbick

VII. Always on Christmas Night there was Music

Kim Williams, John Lamb, Sam Gershon, Emilie Bishop

Instrumentalists

Piano: David Davis

Harp: Merynda Adams

Violin: Rebecca Harris Lee

Cello: Michael Holak

Flute: Kris Lamb

Oboe/English Horn: Teddy Love

Trumpet: Thomas Siebenhuhner

Timpani: Scott Simpson

Guitar: Max Calbick, Dan Malloy

Percussion: Adrienne Ostrander

Additional Percussion: Ilan Onigman

When I realized it was the 20th anniversary of our commissioning Matthew Harris to write us *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, I knew the time was right for this nostalgic, humorous, and joyful piece. To complement it, I tried to find more diverse works by women, and from other cultures, that speak to a child's experience of this time of year, or our memories of those times, even if sometimes bittersweet. I hope this concert will bring you moments of wistfulness, of community in what we all share, and of play!

Dr. Ysaye M. Barnwell, singer, actress, teacher, choir director, community worker and health care professional, is best known for her time as a member of the internationally acclaimed *a cappella* quintet *Sweet Honey In The Rock*, with whom she recorded and toured the world since 1979. She wrote *Wanting Memories* for them as part of the song suite *Crossings*. Like many of her works, it addresses pain head on with wisdom and a strong sense of self.

<https://www.ymbarnwell.com/>

Refrain:

*Yes, I am sitting here wanting memories
to teach me to see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.*

You used to rock me in the cradle of your arms,
you said you'd hold me till the pains of life were gone.
You said you'd comfort me in times like these
and now I need you, and you are gone.

Refrain

Since you've gone and left me,
there's been so little beauty,
but I know I saw it clearly through your eyes.
Now the world outside is such a cold and bitter place,
here inside I have few things that will console,
and when I try to hear your voice above the storms of life

then I remember that I was told.

Refrain

I think on the things that made me feel so wonderful when I was young.
I think on the things that made me laugh, made me dance, made me sing.
I think on the things that made me grow into a being full of pride;
think on these things, for they are truth.

Refrain

I thought that you were gone, but now I know you're with me;
you are the voice that whispers all I need to hear.
I know a "please," a "thank you," and a smile will take me far.
I know that I am you and you are me and we are one.
I know that who I am is numbered in each grain of sand.
I know that I've been blessed again and over again.

Refrain

Caroline Mallonee is an award-winning composer and performer based in Buffalo, NY. She draws inspiration from scientific phenomena, visual art, and musical puzzles. She was a Fulbright Scholar at the Royal Conservatory of the Hague (2005), and holds a Ph.D from Duke, M.M. from Yale School of Music, and a B.A. from Harvard University. Known for writing inventive pieces in English as well as motets in Latin inspired by early polyphony, Dr. Mallonee has been recently commissioned by the Baltimore Choral Art Society, the Young People's Chorus of New York City, the Cecilia Chorus of New York, and the New York Philharmonic, among many others. She is a professional singer in the Vocalis Chamber Choir and is the director of the Walden School Creative Musicians Retreat, a week-long festival for composers and improvisers held in New Hampshire each June. <https://www.carolinemallonee.com/>

The Carolers at My Door was written in 1989 for a Christmas carol competition that Garrison Keillor held on *A Prairie Home Companion*. It won the competition and received its premiere on the show by the Gregg Smith Singers in December 1989. Says the composer: "In a concert called *A Child's Christmas*, I'm glad you'll include 'Carolers' - I really was a child when I wrote it! (Fourteen years old!). I wrote it on a snowy afternoon and it won!"

Around a candle they did sing
to celebrate the newborn king,
and of the joy we hold in store,
sang the carolers at my door.

They sang of people without homes,
people sick and all alone.
They sang of mis'ries of the poor,
these carolers at my door.

They sang of freedom and of peace,
of a life when battles cease,
and of a world where there is no war,
these carolers at my door.

And as they left my house that night,
and vanished into snowy white,
I knew they would return no more,
these carolers at my door.

Snow Globe Upon a Sill is a much more recent work (2021) of Mallonee's, premiered by the Fairfax Choral Society in Virginia. Again, the composer explains: "I wrote 'Snow Globe Upon a Sill' during the pandemic. I didn't go home for Christmas for the first time ever, and I was homesick, and the world felt precarious. I live in Buffalo, and I have a snow globe, and I made the connection between inside and out and spent the next eight months getting the words just right."

Gaze upon a tranquil scene
Encased in glass an evergreen
Snow globe upon a sill

Branches dusted
White with snow
A winter scene, an evergreen

Turn it over
Watch the snow swirl

Set it down
The flakes fall
Landing somewhere new

Each time you do
It's different
The globe is altered, new

Concentrate
Contemplate
Discover something new.

Another trip around the sun
Another winter has begun
Summer has come and gone

Gaze upon a tranquil scene

Out the window evergreens

In late December
Hear the song: “Auld Lang Syne”

On New Year’s Eve
Snow falls
Landing somewhere new

Each year it’s true
Across the globe
All is altered, new

Concentrate
Celebrate
Discover something new.

Born in Bayonne, NJ, American composer and music theorist **George Perle** is best known for his serialist, atonal style, and his 1962 book, *Serial Composition and Atonality: An Introduction to the Music of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern*, which remains a standard text for 20th-century classical music theory. Yet his arrangement of this little French carol is straightforward and tuneful. I find children have always been fascinated by the gorier aspects of the legend of St. Nicholas, and this carol, *The Miracle of Saint Nicholas*, tells the dramatic tale of the “pickle boys” (who also feature prominently in Benjamin Britten’s *St. Nicholas*), chopped up and brined by a murderous butcher during a time of famine, yet fully resurrected by the Saint!

Three little children lost their way,
gleaning¹ the fields one autumn day.
A friendly butcher did they find.
“May we come in, sir, would you mind?”
“Come in, come in, my youngsters dear,
lodging and food you shall have here.”

Three little children lost their way,
gleaning the fields one autumn day.
Once they were in his knife he drew
and all at once the three he slew.
He cut them up in bits so small
and in a brine he dropped them all.

Three little children lost their way,
gleaning the fields one autumn day.
Seven years passed and then there came
into that field, the very same,
good old Saint Nick, and he did stop,
right at the butcher’s little shop.

Three little children lost their way,
gleaning the fields one autumn day.
“Come in, good Saint, welcome you are,
come in and rest, you’ve travelled far.
Come in and rest your weary feet.”
“Butcher” he said “what’s there to eat?
Some of your wares² would suit me fine.
Seven years now they’ve been in the brine,
seven years long years it’s been” he said.
Hearing these words, the butcher fled.
“Butcher, return!” Nicholas cried,
“From the good Lord you cannot hide.”
Three fingers raised he, oh! now see,
forthwith³ arise the children three.

Three little children lost their way,
gleaning the fields one autumn day.
“I slept so well,” said the first child.
“Me too,” the second said and smiled.
And then the third one did reply,
“I dreamt I was with God on high.”

- 1- harvesting
- 2- goods
- 3- immediately

This October I was excited to celebrate the 150th birthday of one of my all-time favorite composers, the prolific **Ralph Vaughan Williams**. In a long and extensive career, he composed music notable for its power, nobility and expressiveness — the essence of “Englishness” — from symphonies and the huge “Dona nobis pacem” oratorio, to exquisite small motets such as “O Taste and See,” written for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. Although described by his wife as a “cheerful agnostic,” Vaughan Williams is beloved for his anthems, hymns and carols, and his editing of *The English Hymnal* (1906). Many beautiful tunes made it into English hymnody thanks to his travels into the countryside at the turn of the century, to collect and notate folk songs and carols from local singers. **Wassail Song** is #5 of an SATB *a cappella* set of *Five English Folk Songs* published in 1913. The opening “wassail!” sounds from afar, and then gets closer and closer, with loud choruses demanding “a bowl of the best,” and then the effect of singers leaving again is recreated.

Wassail, Wassail, all over the town,
Our bread it is white and our ale it is brown;
Our bowl it is made of the green maple tree;
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Here's a health to the ox and to his right eye,
Pray God send our master a good Christmas pie,

A good Christmas pie as e'er I did see.
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Here's a health to the ox and to his right horn,
Pray God send our master a good crop of corn,
A good crop of corn as e'er I did see.
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Here's a health to the ox and to his long tail,
Pray God send our master a good cask of ale,
A good cask of ale as e'er I did see.
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Come, butler, come fill us a bowl of the best;
Then I pray that your soul in heaven may rest;
But if you do bring us a bowl of the small,
May the Devil take butler, bowl and all!

Then here's to the maid in the lily white smock,
Who tripp'd to the door and slipp'd back the lock;
Who tripp'd to the door and pull'd back the pin,
For to let these jolly Wassailers walk in.

Welsh composer **Grace Williams** (no relation to Ralph, although she studied with him) was born in Barry and educated at Barry Grammar School before graduating with a B. Mus at the University College Cardiff in 1926. She continued her studies with Vaughan Williams and Gordon Jacob at the Royal College of Music (London), together with Egon Wellesz in Vienna. After a period of teaching at the Camden School for Girls in London and later at Southlands College of Education, in 1946 she returned to Wales to work on various educational programs for the BBC and as a freelance composer. Early in her career, she established herself as one of the leading Welsh composers of her generation, working mainly on commissions by the BBC and various festivals. Her output of songs and choral pieces contributed a great deal to the Welsh vocal repertoire, with numerous settings of Welsh folk songs, together with part-songs such as *The Nightingale* and *The Flower of Bethlehem*. She is also known for this exquisite harp solo *Hiraeth*, a word which means “deep longing for something, especially one's home.”

Ar hen bren o feddrod Adda
Du a chnotiog foncyff Iesse,
Impiwyd cainc o nef, a heddyw,
O hosanna, O hosanna Wele rosyn Duw.

From a tree that grew from Adam,
From the gnarled rod of Jesse,
Sprang the heavenly flower of Bethlehem,
O hosanna, O hosanna to the rose of God.

Yn y nos ddiser, ddiloergan
Pwll y gaea ym musgrellni
hen y flwyddyn dacw Faban
Mab Maria O Sibila Ganwyd Brenin Nef.

When no moon or stars were shining,
When bleak winter wrapped her
hoary¹ Shroud around us, came a baby,
O Maria, O Sibylla², came the King of Heaven.

Caned robin ar yr eira
Caned Melchior i'w gamelod,
Caned Fyrsil gyda Bwdha Mab Maria
Aleliwia Eia Jesu, Aleliwia
Clod i'w enw, clod.

Let the robin in the snowfield,
And let Melchior in the desert
Sing with Virgin sing with Buddha, son of Mary,
Alleluia to Jesus, Alleluia,
Praise be unto him, praise.

1- ancient

2- 12th century Queen of Jerusalem

(Notes from *World Carols for Choirs*): The composer, conductor and teacher **Ernani Aguiar** is one of the most active musicians in Brazil. He studied in Germany and Italy as well as with eminent musicians in his native country before becoming a professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. His instrumental and choral compositions have enjoyed wide international success. Aguiar is a fellow of the Villa Lobos Institute and a member of the Brazilian Academy of Music. Brazil is a huge country and embraces many diverse Christmas customs. Songs, dances, and particular traditions surround the practice of singing Christmas carols. The texts are often colloquial, using the local dialect. *Acalanto para o Menino Jesus* (Carol for the Baby Jesus) was written for the feast of the Conception of the Virgin Mary and illustrates the Italian influence on Brazilian culture.

Refrain:

*Brilha o céu lá de Belém
a estrêla que nos vem
e nos traz a mensagem.*

*The sky shines bright o'er Bethlehem:
the star comes to us
and brings the news of salvation.*

Dorme ao chão, Menino Paz,
deitado entre animais,
nos revela a verdade.
Dorme, traz a tua paz,
Dizendo o que nós somos
no sossêgo do sono.

Sleep in the manger, Child of Peace,
and lie amongst the animals:
reveal the truth to us.
Sleep, and bring your peace,
tell us what we are
in the lull of sleep.

Refrain

Todo nascemos iguais,
viemos de um só Pai.
Todos somos irmãos,
nós somos todos irmãos.

We are all born equal:
we came from one Father.
We are bound in brotherly love,
in brotherly love we are bound.

Brilha o céu lá de Belém
a estrêla que nos vem
e nos traz a verdade.

The sky shines bright o'er Bethlehem:
the star comes to us
and brings the truth.

Brilha estrêla do teu céu,
os homens têm um véu

Shine upon us heavenly light
and vanquish the veil

que os encobre na guerra.

of darkness that covers us.

Refrain

Dorme ao chão, Menino Paz,
deitado entre animais,
nos revela a verdade.

Sleep in the manger, Child of Peace,
and lie amongst the animals:
reveal the truth to us.

Dorme ao chão, Menino Paz,
descansa e nos traz esperança na Terra.

Sleep in the manger, Child of Peace:
rest and bring hope to the World.

The most common Swedish folk dance is the *langdans* (long dance) in which participants form a long chain, holding hands. Depending on the circumstance, the chain might turn into a ring, with the dancers circling a maypole or Christmas tree in a *ringdans* (ring dance). *Domaredansen* is a *ringdans* and a game played by Swedes of all ages at all times of the year, including Yuletide. The precise origin of the tune is not known, but the melody, along with the current text, first appeared in *Traditioner af folk-dansar* (Afzelius/Ahlstrom, 1814). The title means “Dance for the Judge” (not a law judge, but the judge of a dancing competition). This was originally a simple dance, with children dancing in a rotating circle while holding hands with one person in the center, holding a candle, suddenly shining light on one of the children. If the child smiled or lost composure, that child would then be out of the circle and would go to the center to hold the candle, (and become the “judge”). Over time, the dance got more complicated. Usually done in schools or other child settings, it was an exercise of psychomotor skills, distance, motion and auditory perceptions, etc. So, at the “Alla säga de Hå Hå Hå” (“All say together Hå Hå Hå”), the children release their hands from each other. And at the “All say together Nå Nå Nå”, they reach and grab the hands again. As children get more skilled at the dance, they do this release and catch with their eyes closed. However, “Judge’s Dance” is more of a game than a performance dance, so our dancers have chosen to perform another Swedish dance called *Haderianschottis*. I am grateful to Murray and Randi Spiegel (as always) for their folkdance expertise and for José-Luis Traverso for contacting a Swedish friend who provided this extra information about the “Judge’s Dance.”

Arranger **Drew Collins** is director of choral activities at Central Connecticut State University and an active composer and clinician. Previously, he served on the faculties of Wright State University and Augustana College, and taught in the public schools. Dr. Collins holds degrees from Concordia College (where he studied with Renee Claussen), Boston University, and Cincinnati Conservatory.

Nu vilja vi begynna en domaredans,
medan domaren själv är hemma.
Alla de som i domardansen gå,
deras hjärtan de skola brinna.
Alla säga de hå, hå, hå!
Alla säga de nå, nå, nå!

Now we want to begin a Judge’s Dance,
while the judge himself is home.
All those join the Judge’s Dance,
their hearts will burn with love.
They all say: ha, ha, ha!
They all say, na, na, na!

Har du drömt om din käreasta i natt,
skall du mot ljuset le.

If you have dreamt of your sweetheart tonight,
You will smile toward the candlelight.

Emile Desamours, Haitian composer, arranger, choral director, and engineer, was born in Cap-Haïtien in 1941 to a musical family that encouraged his musical talents. He is one of Haiti's most active composers. He studied engineering at the *Institut Supérieur Technique d'Haiti* in Port-au-Prince and music at the *Conservatoire National de Musique*. He has served as music director for Haiti's premiere folk choir, *Voix et Harmonie*, and composed and arranged numerous pieces for piano and chorus, often employing elements of Haitian folk music in his works, such as in *Noël Ayisyen*, in which the chorus imitates folk instruments. We are grateful to principal Elisee Bastien from Orphanage LaConcorde in Jacmel, Haiti, for his help with pronunciation.

We invite you to donate to the orphanage via the fundraiser, LOVE Takes Root:

<https://fundraise.lovetakesroot.org/give/116633/#!/donation/checkout>

Sé té nan Betlèòm
Yon ti kwen nan Judé,
Mari té f'on gason
A minui n'on étab.
Sé té pitit Bon Dyé,
É sé té wa dè wa.
Dépi'm tou piti kon sa
Mwen konn istwa sa.

It was in Bethlehem,
A little corner of Judea,
That Mary had a baby boy
At midnight in a stable.
He was the Son of God
And he was the King of Kings.
Since I was a little child
I've known this story.

Té genyen twa wa maj
Ki swiv yon gwo zétwal,
Kado yo nan men yo
Pou yo vin' adoré'l.
É yo té byen sézi
Lè yo wè ti Jézi
Kouché nan mitan yon bèf
Avèk yon bourik.

There were three wise kings
Who followed a great star
With gifts in their hands
To come worship the child.
And they were quite amazed
When they saw little Jesus
Lying between a cow
And a donkey.

A la kotéou tandé, mézanmi wo!
Noèl sé yon istwa ki byen étranj!
Jézi, pitit Bon Dyé, wa dè wa,
Ki pa genyen bèso,
Li kouché sou pay pami zannimo...O! O!

Hear that, my friends!
Noel is a strange story indeed!
Jesus, Son of God, King of Kings,
Doesn't even have a cradle.
He sleeps on the straw among animals...Oh my!

Yo rélé'l admirab,
Konséyé, Dyé puisan,
Sé Pè étènèl tou
É li sé prins la pè.
Ni bèjé, ni wa maj
Adoré'l a jènou.
Yo ba li kado
Sélon sa yo té genyen.

They called him Wonderful,
Counselor, Mighty God;
The Everlasting Father, too;
And he was the Prince of Peace.
Both shepherds and wisemen
Bowed down to worship him.
They gave him gifts
According to what they had.

Lè sa si nou té la (tan-man-nam),
Fok nou ta fè yon jès (tan-man-nam),
Nou ta ofri mizik (ba-dap-pi)
An bon jan ayisyen (tchi-ki-tchi).
Nou tap poté tanbou,
Manniboula, banbou, tcha-tcha,
Ak bèl kout bandjo
Nou ta chamé ti Jézi

Jézi, Jézi, ti Jézi nou,
A la renmen, nou renmen wou.
Ou poté la pè pou tout moun,
É wou vin' établi la gras.
Noël, Noël, Noël, viv Noël!

Back then, if we'd been there (*ta-ma-na*),
We'd have done something fitting (*ta-ma-na*),
We'd have offered him music (*ba-dap-peem*)
Of the best Haitian kind (*chee-kee-chee*).
We'd have brought drums,
Manniboulas¹, vaccins², maracas;
With fine banjo strums
We'd have charmed little Jesus.

Jesus, Jesus, our little Jesus,
We love you greatly.
You bring peace to all people
And you offer us grace.
Noel, Noel, Noel, long live Noel!

1- rustic pizzicato bass instrument consisting of a wooden resonance box with three metallic blades on the front
2- instrument made with one or two sections of bamboo, blown with the lips

Singer-songwriter **Flory Jagoda** was born in Bosnia. Her ancestors were a group of Sephardic Jews who once thrived in Spain in the 15th century, and her family still spoke Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) in the home. Later her family moved to Zagreb in Croatia, and during the Second World War, they were forced to flee to Split; (they put 15-year-old Flory on the train and told her to play music on her *harmoniku* [accordion] so that she was not bothered by officials checking papers for Jews). Later she went to Italy to work and met and married American soldier Harry Jagoda. Before she and her husband left for the US, they had the horrifying news that 42 family members of her home village had been killed in the Holocaust. She dedicated her life to raising her four children and performing, teaching and writing songs in Ladino. She became known world-wide as the “Keeper of the Flame” of Sephardic music. “Oh it is not me who is singing,” she would say, “it is my Nona.” In 2002, she was honored as a National Endowment for the Arts Heritage Fellow, and her 90th birthday was celebrated at the Library of Congress with a full interview (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQ-C2SRDlv0>). **Ocho Kandelikas**, a fun counting song of Hanukkah candles, is one of her best-known works.

Arranger **Joshua R. Jacobson**, founder and director of the Zamir Chorale of Boston, holds a bachelor's degree in music from Harvard College, a masters in choral conducting from the New England Conservatory, a doctor of musical arts from the University of Cincinnati, and a doctor of humane letters *honoris causa* from Hebrew College. He served 45 years as professor of music and director of choral activities at Northeastern University and was also visiting professor and senior consultant in the School of Jewish Music at Hebrew College. He has made it his life's work to promote, perform and make accessible Jewish choral music of all periods and styles.

Please join the basses in counting the candles (bolded below) when instructed.

Hanuka linda 'sta aki,
ocho kandelas para mi.

Beautiful Hanukkah is here,
eight candles for me.

Una kandelika, **dos** kandelikas,
tres kandelikas, **kuatro** kandelikas,
sintju kandelikas, **seysh** kandelikas,
siete kandelikas,
ocho kandelas para mi.

One little candle, two little candles,
three little candles, four little candles,
five little candles, six little candles,
seven little candles,
eight candles for me.

Los pastelikos vo kumer,
con almendrikas i la miel.

I will eat the little pies,
with almonds and honey.

Muchas fiestas vo fazer,
con alegrias i plazer.

I will give many parties,
with happiness and pleasure.

After receiving his master's degree in music from Southern Methodist University in Dallas in 1989, **Paul Caldwell** joined forces with fellow composer Sean Ivory in the early 1990s. He was artistic director for Chicago's Windy City Gay Chorus and Windy City Treble Quire. In 2016, he was nearly killed by a hit-and-run driver. After months of painful recuperation, surgeries and being cared for lovingly by his choirs, he was able to start his current position as the artistic director of the Seattle Men's Chorus and Seattle Women's Chorus. He is committed to being a voice for the voiceless and to many projects for the LGBTQ community.

Sean Ivory currently directs the Grand Rapids Symphony Youth Chorus and is also the choral director at Forest Hills Central High School. The duo began arranging music together spontaneously in the early 1990s when they were both working with a community-based youth choir in Grand Rapids, MI. Their musical partnership was further cultivated from 1993 to 1997 during summers spent together at the American Boychoir School in Princeton, NJ. They provide the following notes:

Go Where I Send Thee! is a gospel arrangement of a spiritual from the African-American folk tradition which we first became familiar with through the work of Cynthia Wilson Felder in Texas. From the many variants of the text, we have developed an extended version which allowed us to maximize the Gospel-style modulation and to give our singers significant one-line reminders of some of the biblical stories on which the African-American musical tradition is based. Some of the scriptural references are quite evident; others are somewhat cloaked: Eleven refers to the opinion that Judas Iscariot might not fare well on judgment day. Nine is the number which traditionally represents the nine choirs of angels. Eight recalls the number of people instructed to board Noah's ark: the shipbuilder, his wife, their three sons and their wives. Five refers to the loaves of bread that ultimately fed five thousand people. Four gospel writers are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Three Hebrew children (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) were thrown into a fiery furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar.

Children, go where I send thee!
Children, how shall I send thee?

I'm gonna send thee one by one,

One for the little bitty baby,
the baby boy who was born in Bethlehem.

I'm gonna send thee two by two,
Two for Paul and Silas,
One for the little bitty baby,
the baby boy who was born in Bethlehem.

I'm gonna send thee six by six,
six for days when the world was fixed,
five for the bread they did divide,
four for the Gospel writers,
three for the Hebrew children,
two for Paul and Silas,
one for the little bitty baby,
the baby boy who was born in Bethlehem.

I'm gonna send thee twelve by twelve,
twelve for the twelve disciples,
'leven of 'em singin' in heaven,
ten for the ten commandments,
nine for the angel choirs divine,
eight for the eight the flood couldn't take,
seven for the day God laid down his head,
six for days when the world was fixed,
five for the bread they did divide,
four for the Gospel writers,
three for the Hebrew children,
two for Paul and Silas,
one for the little bitty baby,
the baby boy who was born in Bethlehem.

Sir Richard Rodney Bennett was an English composer of film, TV and concert music, and also a jazz pianist and vocalist. He was based in New York City from 1979 until his death there in 2012. Like George Perle, for part of his career he was immersed in the techniques of the European serialists through early study with Pierre Boulez, but in his later years, he adopted an increasingly tonal idiom. *Puer Nobis* (A Child [Born] for Us) is an intimate carol written in 2009 for the Marchioness of Aberdeen on a text by Alice Meynell (1847-1922), British poet, editor, critic, and suffragist.

Given, not lent,
And not withdrawn—once sent,
This Infant of mankind, this One
Is still the little welcome Son.

New every year,

New-born and newly dear,
He comes with tidings and a song,
The ages long, the ages long.

Even as the cold
Keen¹ winter grows not old,
As childhood is so fresh, foreseen,
And spring in the familiar green.

Sudden as sweet
Come the expected feet,
All joy is young and new all art,
And He too, whom we have by heart.

1- harsh/biting

Misty L. Dupuis is an active composer, conductor, and vocalist working in the Denver, CO area. She is the founder and artistic director of *La Musica di Donne* Chamber Choir, a choir dedicated to the performance, preservation, and promotion of the compositions of women. She is also the choir director for St. Barnabas Episcopal Parish and writes an active “Women in Music” blog. Misty earned her master of music degree in choral conducting at the University of Colorado in Boulder, where she was an assistant conductor with the Women's Chorus under the direction of Dr. Andrea Ramsey. “As I have searched for poetry to set, I have made a disturbing discovery. Far too often, the work of women poets has a way of disappearing into obscurity. I have not found this fact surprising as I have found the same issue in my research of women's music compositions. In response, I have become passionate about setting the work of women poets.” *A Winter Ride* sets a poem by Amy Lowell (1874-1952). Writes Dupuis: “Lowell paints an irresistible picture that spreads her joy to her readers. This setting has attempted to put some of that joy to music with its fast-paced ‘galloping’ rhythm and explosive ‘joys’ throughout.”
<http://www.mistyl Dupuis.net/>

Who shall declare the joy of running,
who shall declare the joy?
Who shall tell of the pleasures of flight!
Springing and spurning the tufts of wild heather,
Sweeping, wide-winged, through the blue dome of light.
Everything mortal has moments immortal,
Swift and God-gifted, immeasurably bright.

So with the stretch of the white road before me,
Shining snow-crystals rainbowed by the sun,
Fields are white, stained with long, cool, blue shadows,
Strong with the strength of my horse as we run.
Joy in the touch of the wind and the sunlight!
With the vigorous earth I am one.

Dr. Tracy Wong hails from Malaysia and is a choral conductor, music educator, composer, vocalist, and pianist. She currently resides in Ontario, Canada where she is the assistant professor of choral studies at the University of Western Ontario. She holds a DMA and MM in Choral Conducting from the University of Toronto. She provides the following notes:

Singkap Siaga was commissioned in 2020-21 by Sonic Timelapse Project and members of its Conductors Commission Club. As a partner composer of the Project, I had the immense privilege of reading and absorbing the content submitted by the choral communities in Canada who were experiencing the global COVID-19 pandemic. This piece is based on my reflections of these submissions, as well as my own experiences.

I drew inspiration from the almost-extinct Malay tradition of shadow puppet theatre and its music - *Wayang Kulit Kelantan*. I remember learning how to make these puppets in school in Malaysia. This artform reminded me how light and shadow are equal in beauty, thus shifting my perspective of “shadow” and “darkness” having negative connotations. I have been drawn to a scene in the show where the *Dewa Panah* (two Arrow Gods), one good and one evil, descend from the sky and battle each other. Neither wins. Life goes on in a balance.

The piece is 5% text and 95% vocables, based on the pre-existing vocal equivalent of the stylings and tone of the traditional instruments used in the *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* shadow puppet theatre practice – *gong, dak, ding, dong, tsak, tsng*. The rhythmic elements and patterns are also inspired by the music accompanying the *Dewa Panah* scene. Together with body percussion, this piece has a gutsy and fiery energy that hopefully brings singers to a positive headspace, especially when practicing alone.
<https://tracywongmusic.com/>

Singkap = to open, to reveal, quick change
Siaga = ever ready

Matthew Harris sent us these notes for our World Premiere of *A Child's Christmas in Wales* in 2002:

When Anne Matlack asked me to write a large piece for Harmonium's holiday concert, I immediately thought of Dylan Thomas' Christmas classic. This recollection of the poet's typical Christmas day as a boy in Wales conjures up for each of us the lost magic of childhood. I made some cuts in the text, but otherwise my libretto is simply the story as Dylan Thomas wrote it. The music opens and closes with a tune reminiscent of Welsh folk songs; in between, it ventures into various byways as it follows the narrator's memories. This work is fondly dedicated to Anne and the Harmonium Choral Society.

Matthew Harris, born in 1956 in New York State, studied at The Juilliard School, New England Conservatory, and Harvard University. His teachers included Elliott Carter, Milton Babbitt, Roger Sessions, and Donald Martino. Mr. Harris's highly popular choral works have been commissioned or premiered by leading choruses such as the Dale Warland Singers, Phoenix Bach Choir, Los Angeles Chamber Singers, Western Wind, and Cantori New York, and sung by

countless school and community choirs across America. Other commissions have come from the Fromm Foundation/Aspen Music Festival (where he was a guest composer), Verdehr Trio, Modesto Symphony Orchestra, Haydn-Mozart Orchestra, American Composers Forum, Schubert Club and US-Mexico Cultural Fund. The National Endowment for the Arts twice awarded him a Composer Fellowship; the New York Foundation for the Arts, Tanglewood, Meet the Composer, The MacDowell Colony and Yaddo also awarded him fellowships. Composition awards he has won include those from the Chautauqua Chamber Singers, Georges Enesco Foundation, Society for New Music, National Association of Composers, Musicians Accord, Diva Complex, Taubman Institute, ASCAP, and BMI. Mr. Harris has taught at Fordham University and Kingsborough College, CUNY. In 1988, he founded Harris Musicology. He currently teaches at Brooklyn College and New York City College of Technology, CUNY. Matthew has also been a judge for Harmonium's High School Choral Composition Contest the longest-for 20 years!

For this 20th anniversary performance of *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, I worked with my professional instrumentalists and those instrumentalists in the group, as well as our amazing accompanist Dave Davis, (and with the composer's permission) to find a version that uses the piano and includes much of the color of the original orchestration while using a smaller chamber orchestra than the original. Lots of charming solos come from within the group (in true Harmonium fashion). The choir has once again enjoyed the great humor with which Matthew Harris has made this text come alive. <http://matthewharrismusic.com/news.html>

Notes and texts for *A Child's Christmas in Wales*:

The first movement uses a nostalgic theme reminiscent of a Welsh folk song. The central section introduces some of Harris's typical chromatic writing and segues into the second movement.

I. One Christmas was So Much Like Another

One Christmas was so much like another, in those years around the sea-town corner now and out of all sound except the distant speaking of the voices I sometimes hear a moment before sleep, that I can never remember whether it snowed for six days and six nights when I was twelve or whether it snowed for twelve days and twelve nights when I was six.

All the Christmases roll down toward the two-tongued sea, like a cold and headlong¹ moon bundling down the sky that was our street; and they stop at the rim of the ice-edged, fish-freezing waves, and I plunge my hands in the snow and bring out whatever I can find. In goes my hand into that wool-white bell-tongued ball of holidays resting at the rim of the carol-singing sea, and out come Mrs. Prothero and the firemen.

1- reckless

The dissonance of these chords evokes the cacophonous atmosphere of the event. The text is declaimed in an operatic and homophonic manner allowing the story to be told and the humor to come through.

II. Fire!

“Fire!” cried Mrs. Prothero, and she beat the dinner-gong.

And we ran down the garden, with the snowballs in our arms, toward the house; and smoke, indeed, was pouring out of the dining-room, and the gong was bombilating, and Mrs. Prothero was announcing ruin like a town crier in Pompeii.

Something was burning all right; perhaps it was Mr. Prothero, who always slept there after midday dinner with a newspaper over his face. But he was standing in the middle of the room, saying, "A fine Christmas!" and smacking at the smoke with a slipper. "Call the fire brigade," cried Mrs. Prothero as she beat the gong.

"They won't be there," said Mr. Prothero, "it's Christmas."

There was no fire to be seen, only clouds of smoke and Mr. Prothero standing in the middle of them, waving his slipper as though he were conducting.

"Do something," he said.

And we threw all our snowballs into the smoke—I think we missed Mr. Prothero—and ran out of the house to the telephone box.

"Let's call the police as well," Jim said.

"And the ambulance."

"And Ernie Jenkins, he likes fires."

But we only called the fire brigade, and soon the fire engine came and three tall men in helmets brought a hose into the house and Mr. Prothero got out just in time before they turned it on. Nobody could have had a noisier Christmas Eve. And when the firemen turned off the hose and were standing in the wet, smoky room, Jim's Aunt, Miss Prothero, came downstairs and peered in at them. Jim and I waited, very quietly, to hear what she would say to them. She said the right thing, always. She looked at the three tall firemen in their shining helmets, standing among the smoke and cinders and dissolving snowballs, and she said, "Would you like anything to read?"

The nostalgic feeling returns in the lyrical tenor solo, with soprano/alto interjections about the snows of today.

III. Years and Years Ago

Years and years ago, when I was a boy, when there were wolves in Wales, and birds the color of red-flannel petticoats whisked past the harp-shaped hills, when we sang and wallowed all night and day in caves that smelt like Sunday afternoons in damp front farmhouse parlors, when we rode the daft¹ and happy hills bareback, it snowed and it snowed. But here a small boy says: "It snowed last year, too. I made a snowman and my brother knocked it down then I knocked my brother down and then we had tea."

"But that was not the same snow," I say. "Our snow was not only shaken from white wash buckets down the sky, it came shawling² out of the ground and swam and drifted out of the arms and hands and bodies of the trees; snow grew overnight on the roofs of the houses like a pure and grandfather moss, minutely ivied the walls and settled on the postman, opening the gate, like a dumb, numb thunder-storm of white, torn Christmas cards."

1- frivolously merry

2- wrapping around (like a shawl)

Here is a movement that needs to cover a lot of text and does so in the form of a patter song. Chromatics are used again and close dissonances text-paint the scratchy feeling of wool next to the skin!

IV. The Useful Presents

“And then the presents?”

“There were the Useful Presents: engulfing mufflers of the old coach days, and mittens made for giant sloths; zebra scarfs of a substance like silky gum that could be tug-o’-warred down to the galoshes; blinding tam-o’-shanters¹ like patchwork tea cozies and bunny-suited busbies² and balaclavas³ for victims of head-shrinking tribes; from aunts who always wore wool next to the skin there were mustached and rasping vests that made you wonder why the aunts had any skin left at all; and once I had a little crocheted nose-bag⁴ from an aunt now, alas, no longer whinnying⁵ with us. And pictureless books in which small boys, though warned with quotations not to, *would* skate on Farmer Giles’ pond and did and drowned; and books that told me everything about the wasp, except why.”

1- traditional Scottish bonnet with a pom-pom in the center

2- tall fur hat

3- knitted hat that covers the entire head and neck, leaving holes for the eyes and mouth

4- a bag, filled with fodder, fastened over a horse’s muzzle for feeding

5- neighing

A list of mildly naughty and suggestive Christmas gifts is set to music in a sultry swing rhythm.

V. The Useless Presents

“Go on to the Useless Presents.”

“Bags of moist and many-colored jelly babies and a folded flag and a false nose and a tram-conductor’s cap and a machine that punched tickets and rang a bell; never a catapult; once, by mistake that no one could explain, a little hatchet; and a celluloid duck that made, when you pressed it, a most unducklike sound, a mewing¹ moo that an ambitious cat might make who wished to be a cow; and a painting book in which I could make the grass, the trees, the sea and the animals any colour I pleased, and still the dazzling sky-blue sheep are grazing in the red field under the rainbow-billed and pea-green birds.

Hardboileds, toffee, fudge and allsorts, crunches, cracknels, humbugs, glaciers, marzipan, and butterwelsh for the Welsh. And troops of bright tin soldiers who, if they could not fight, could always run. And Snakes-and-Families and Happy Ladders. And Easy Hobbi-Games for Little Engineers, complete with instructions.

Oh, easy for Leonardo! And a whistle to make the dogs bark to wake up the old man next door to make him beat on the wall with his stick to shake our picture off the wall.

And a packet of cigarettes: you put one in your mouth and you stood at the corner of the street and you waited for hours, in vain, for an old lady to scold you for smoking a cigarette, and then with a smirk you ate it.”

1- meowing

This next movement continues the operatic dramatic presentation, which starts like a choral recitative and proceeds through graphic musical depictions of the groaning of uncles, the scurrying of aunts, and other domestic details. An Allegro section recalls the “presents” music as the child tries to put together a toy “following the instructions for little engineers.” There is also an eerily descriptive section about caroling in the fog, and an ancient voice that joins in the singing of ‘Good King Wenceslas’ and scares the children.

VI. The Uncles

“Were there Uncles like in our house?”

“There are always Uncles at Christmas.

The same Uncles.”

For dinner we had turkey and blazing pudding, and after dinner the Uncles sat in front of the fire, loosened all buttons, put their large moist hands over their watch chains, groaned a little and slept. Mothers, aunts and sisters scuttled to and fro, bearing tureens¹. Auntie Bessie, who had already been frightened, twice, by a clock-work mouse, whimpered at the sideboard and had some elderberry wine. The dog was sick. Auntie Dosie had to have three aspirins, but Auntie Hannah, who liked port, stood in the middle of the snowbound back yard, singing like a big-bosomed thrush. I would blow up balloons to see how big they would blow up to; and, when they burst, which they all did, the Uncles jumped and rumbled. In the rich and heavy afternoon, the Uncles breathing like dolphins and the snow descending, I would sit among festoons² and Chinese lanterns and nibble dates and try to make a model *mano*'-war, following the Instructions for Little Engineers, and produce what might be mistaken for a sea-going tramcar.

Or I would go out, my bright new boots squeaking, into the white world, on to the seaward hill, to call on Jim and Dan and Jack and to pad³ through the still streets, leaving huge deep footprints on the hidden pavements.

“I bet people will think there's been hippos.”

“What would you do if you saw a hippo coming down our street?”

“I'd go like this, bang! I'd throw him over the railings and roll him down the hill and then I'd tickle him under the ear and he'd wag his tail.”

“What would you do if you saw *two* hippos?”

Iron-flanked and bellowing he-hippos clanked and battered through the scudding⁴ snow toward us as we passed Mr. Daniel's house.

“Let's post Mr. Daniel a snow-ball through his letter box.”

“Let's write things in the snow.”

“Let's write, ‘Mr. Daniel looks like a spaniel’ all over his lawn.”

Or we walked on the white shore.

“Can the fishes see it's snowing?”

We returned home through the poor streets where only a few children fumbled with bare red fingers in the wheel-rutted⁵ snow and cat-called after us, their voices fading away, as we trudged uphill, into the cries of the dock birds and the hooting of ships out in the whirling bay. And then, at tea the recovered Uncles would be jolly; and the ice cake loomed in the centre of the table like a marble grave. Auntie Hannah laced her tea with rum, because it was only once a year.

And I remember that we went singing carols once, when there wasn't the shaving of a moon to light the flying streets. At the end of a long road was a drive that led to a large house, and we stumbled up the darkness of the drive that night, each one of us afraid, each one holding a stone in his hand in case, and all of us too brave to say a word. The wind through the trees made noises as of old and unpleasant and maybe webfooted men wheezing in caves. We reached the black bulk of the house.⁶

“What shall we give them? Hark the Herald?”

“No,” Jack said, “Good King Wenceslas. I'll count three.”

One, two, three, and we began to sing, our voices high and seemingly distant in the snow-felted darkness round the house that was occupied by nobody we knew. We stood close together, near the dark door.

Good King Wenceslas looked out

On the Feast of Stephen ...

And then a small, dry voice, like the voice of someone who has not spoken for a long time, joined our singing: a small, dry, eggshell voice from the other side of the door: a small dry voice through the keyhole. And when we stopped running we were outside *our* house; the front room was lovely; balloons floated under the hot-water-bottle-gulping gas; everything was good again and shone over the town.

“Perhaps it was a ghost,” Jim said.

“Perhaps it was trolls,” Dan said, who was always reading.

“Let’s go in and see if there’s any jelly left,” Jack said. And we did that.

- 1- a deep, and usually covered, dish for serving soup, stew, or other foods
- 2- chain of flowers, leaves, or ribbons, hung in a curve as a decoration
- 3- to walk as if with padded feet
- 4- flurrying
- 5- track marks from a plow
- 6- ‘We reached the dark, imposing silhouette of the house.’

The folk-like music of the first movement is recalled here in the last movement, and a solo violin seems to illustrate the line “an uncle played the fiddle.” The movement grows to a climax with a sudden descriptive modulation, up a whole step, (“and hear the music rising”); and then ends gently, as the instruments take over and the child falls asleep listening to the music.

VII. Always on Christmas Night there was Music

Always on Christmas night there was music. An uncle played the fiddle, a cousin sang “Cherry Ripe,” and another uncle sang “Drake’s Drum.” It was very warm in the little house.

Auntie Hannah, who had got on to the parsnip wine, sang a song about Bleeding Hearts and Death, and then another in which she said her heart was like a Bird’s Nest; and then everybody laughed again; and then I went to bed. Looking through my bedroom window, out into the moonlight and the unending smoke-coloured snow, I could see the lights in the windows of all the other houses on our hill and hear the music rising from them up the long, steadily falling night. I turned the gas down, I got into bed. I said some words to the close and holy darkness, and then I slept.

-From *A Child’s Christmas in Wales* by Dylan Thomas, ©1956 by New Directions.
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We wish you a joyous season and happy memories! Come hear us at First Night Morris,
New Year’s Eve at 7 and 8:15PM at St. Peter’s Church, Morristown.